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Executive Registry

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

13 January 1982

MEMORANDUMDetecting Nuclear Weapons in Cuba

Aircraft that are configured to deliver nuclear weapons are equipped with special arming and safety devices. If the aircraft does not normally carry bombs--Cuba's MIG-21 fighters for instance--special pilons might also be required.

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Regardless of whether Cuba's MIG's are presently capable of dropping nuclear weapons, they could be so configured in a few hours if the necessary equipment is made available.

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Apart from the aircraft equipment, the other ingredients necessary to provide Cuba a nuclear delivery capability are absent. There is no evidence that nuclear weapons are being stored in Cuba, or that Cuban pilots have practiced the techniques for delivering nuclear bombs. To our knowledge, the Soviets have never provided this training outside of the Warsaw Pact.

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This memorandum was requested by the Deputy Director of Intelligence. It was prepared by [] of the [] Middle America/Caribbean Division, Office of African and Latin American Analysis and contains information available as of 13 January 1982. Questions and comments should be directed to Chief, Middle America/Caribbean Division, OALA, []

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[REDACTED]

The addition of another squadron of MIG-23 fighter-bombers to the Cuban Air Force represents only a small, incremental increase in combat capabilities that is consistent with other recent improvements in Cuba's ground and naval forces. The MIG-23s can carry a heavier weapons load and deliver it to a greater distance than Cuba's MIG-21s, but remain primarily tactical ground support aircraft. [REDACTED]

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Of greater concern to us would be the provision to Cuba of TU-16 or TU-22 medium or intermediate-range bombers, such as those supplied to Egypt, Libya, and Iraq. The presence of such aircraft would be a clear indication of a Soviet attempt to provide Cuba an offensive threat against the United States. [REDACTED]

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